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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Telcon with President Putin of Russia (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
President Putin

Interpreter: Peter Afanasenko
Notetakers: Chris MacPherson, Tim Cronin,
and Noelle Neimer

DATE, TIME: August 23, 2004, 8:46 - 9:02 a.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Crawford, TX

The President: Hello? (U)

President Putin: Hello, President Bush. (U)

The President: Is Vladimir on? (U)

President Putin: Hello. (U)

The President: Hey, Vladimir. How are you? (U)

President Putin: Thank you, George. How are you? I am fine.
(U)

The President: Well, your English is very good. (U)

President Putin: You are very kind to me. (U)

The President: Listen I am calling because I haven't heard your
voice in a while. I am out here at the ranch, and I thought I
would call and see how you are doing? (U)

President Putin: Yes. I am very happy to hear your voice and
agree we have not talked in a while. (U)

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The President: Well, I appreciate you taking my call. On a personal note, all is going well on the campaign, and I hope you and I will work together for another 4 years. (U)

President Putin: Me, too. (U)

The President: Good. Secondly, I have a couple points on my mind. On the Iranians, I want to thank you very much for keeping the pressure on them. It is important that we continue to work together on a plan that will not allow them to produce a nuclear weapon. (S)

President Putin: We will proceed that way, yes. (S)

The President: I appreciate that a lot. If we can speak with the same voice it sends a clear message to the Mullahs. (S)

President Putin: Mr. Chirac and Mr. Schroeder will be visiting with me very shortly and I will be sure to raise this issue with them. (S)

The President: Oh, good. Give them my best. (S)

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President Putin: I will. (S)

The President: Thanks. And Iraq is tough, but we are making progress. Slowly but surely things are changing. We're losing troops, but they are losing more. And this guy Allawi is a good, strong leader, just like you. You would like him. A government evolving that would be an ally in the war on terror would be helpful. (S)

President Putin: All right. Hello? (U)

The President: Yeah, Vladimir? Anyway, we were just calling and appreciate your work in Afghanistan. We need to make sure the Karzai government gets the support they need. I am concerned about the opium crop and the heroin crop. I know our aides are talking and you are concerned about it and so am I. (S)

President Putin: Hello? George, if you are finished I would like to say a couple words, too. (S)

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The President: Please, of course. Thank you. (U)

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President Putin: First I have no doubt about your future success at the election. Therefore, taking this opportunity, I would like to invite you to visit us for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the victory in World War II on May 9th. (S)

The President: Thank you, I like an optimist. (S)

President Putin: As I understand it, you accept the invitation. Right? (S)

The President: Right. (U)

President Putin: I certainly am aware that the pre-election situation is not easy. In fact, you are in for quite a struggle including the television debates with Kerry. But given your vision of the world and your understanding, you will be successful, and I wish you all the best. (S)

The President: Well, thank you. (U)

President Putin: We certainly are following very carefully the developments in Iraq and are very sympathetic to the people over there. And despite existing problems and the initial differences in our positions, I believe at this time that many people have come to understand what is really happening, in particular what is happening in Chechnya, and understand the danger and the overall threat of terrorists. And they also understand what kind of people they have to deal with, kind of blood thirsty and anguished people, that is understandable. (S)

The President: Yeah. (U)

President Putin: So we will be trying to exert every kind of assistance to the people, also in light of the forthcoming elections. I believe that the meeting last week between Secretary Rumsfeld and Minister Ivanov in Petersburg went very well. Rumsfeld informed Ivanov about the proposal to relocate a variety of U.S. bases in Europe. We appreciate this information, and we believe that it is important to avoid misunderstanding about the situation. Another problem that has been of some concern to us are the activities by the new authorities in Georgia in the zone of conflict in South Ossetia. But I think that situation has become better. The Georgians have started to retreat out of the conflict zone. You know, Condi talked to Medvedev and Mr. Evans talked to our Economic Minister (Gref) recently. I believe that a working group composed of our energy ministers is a good idea and would

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(provide a positive impetus and give the right direction to the world in the economic area. At that meeting I think we could announce an increase in our oil production. And we have recently been increasing the oil production and exports. And, since the market is psychological in nature, such messages in the world would be good. I agree with your assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, and we would like to see to it that the elections proceed as we want, normally. I hope your home situation is quite good, and I would like you to give my best to your wife and daughters. Thanks again for your call, and if you hadn't called, I would have called because the pause in our conversation has been long, and I wanted to talk to you. Here in Sochi, I am spending what I would call a quasi vacation. Your Dad and Mom were here last year, and I hope we have a chance to meet here again. If you want to compare notes, call me or I'll call you. (S)

The President: Great. I love to talk to you. And you are right, there is no such thing as a vacation for people like us. It is always a quasi vacation. Give my best to your girls and your wife. Thank you for taking my call. (U)

(President Putin: Thank you very, very much, George. Well, I am sending you a bear hug at this point, and I certainly understand what you are going through at a difficult period with Iraq. But I am sure you will deal with that. I still think you will prevail. (S)

The President: Thank you, my friend. (U)

President Putin: All the best. (U)

The President: All the best to you, Sir. (U)

President Putin: Bye, bye. (U)

-- End of Conversation --